



NOAA FISHERIES

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

NMFS Announces a Proposed Rule to Establish the Quotas and Opening Dates for the 2014 Atlantic Shark Commercial Fishing Season

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces a proposed rule that would establish quota levels and opening dates for the 2014 Atlantic commercial shark fisheries.

The proposed 2014 quotas, adjusted as appropriate to account for over- and underharvests, are summarized in Table 1 by management group. Adjustments based on over- and underharvests depend on stock status. The proposed rule uses landings data received as of July 16, 2013. The final rule will be based on updated data received in dealer reports by November 15, 2013. Thus, the quotas in the proposed rule are subject to change in the final rule. All dealer reports that are received after that date will be used to adjust the 2015 quotas, as appropriate.

Specifically, we propose to:

- Open all shark fisheries on the effective date for this action (*i.e.*, on or about January 1, 2014).
- Adjust retention limits during the season, as needed, to effectively manage the stock and to ensure fishing opportunities throughout the applicable regions.
- Adjust the Gulf of Mexico blacktip shark and non-blacknose small coastal shark management group quotas based on underharvest in 2013.
- Adjust the regional blacknose shark management group quotas over a one to five-year timeframe based on an overharvest in 2012.
- Adjust the porbeagle quota to complete accounting for overharvests from 2011 and 2012.

Public hearings are currently not scheduled. If you are interested in public hearings for the proposed rule, please contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz or Guý DuBeck by phone 301-427-8503.

The comment period for this proposed rule is open until September 23, 2013. Written comments, identified by “NOAA-NMFS-2013-0112”, may be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>, or sent by fax or mail to the contact information included below. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter N/A in the required fields, if you wish to remain anonymous). You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about the fishery. Official notice of Federal actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of Federal Register. For further information on this proposed rule, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz or Guý DuBeck at 301-427-8503. Copies of the proposed rule are available upon request from the

Highly Migratory Species Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone: 301-427-8503, fax: 301-713-1917). The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>.

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Table 1. 2014 proposed quotas and opening dates for the Atlantic shark fisheries. All quotas and landings are dressed weight (dw), in metric tons (mt), unless specified otherwise. Table includes landings data as of July 16, 2013; final quotas are subject to change based on landings as of November 15, 2013.

Management Group	Region	2013 Annual Quota (A)	Preliminary 2013 Landings ¹ (B)	Adjustments (C)	2014 Base Annual Quota (D)	2014 Proposed Annual Quota (D+C)	Season Opening Dates
Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks	Gulf of Mexico	157.5 mt dw (347,317 lb dw)	147.6 mt dw (325,476 lb dw)	-	157.5 mt dw (347,317 lb dw)	157.5 mt dw (347,317 lb dw)	On or about January 1, 2014
	Atlantic	168.9 mt dw (372,552 lb dw)	88.1 mt dw (194,327 lb dw)	-	168.9 mt dw (372,552 lb dw)	168.9 mt dw (372,552 lb dw)	
Blacktip Sharks	Gulf of Mexico	256.6 mt dw (565,700 lb dw)	231.3 mt dw (509,984 lb dw)	25.3 mt dw (55,716 lb dw)	256.6 mt dw (565,700 lb dw)	281.9 mt dw (621,416 lb dw)	
Hammerhead Sharks	Gulf of Mexico	25.3 mt dw (55,722 lb dw)	10.1 mt dw (22,156 lb dw)	-	25.3 mt dw (55,722 lb dw)	25.3 mt dw (55,722 lb dw)	
	Atlantic	27.1 mt dw (59,736 lb dw)	8.4 mt dw (18,523 lb dw)	-	27.1 mt dw (59,736 lb dw)	27.1 mt dw (59,736 lb dw)	
Non-Sandbar LCS Research	No regional quotas	50.0 mt dw (110,230 lb dw)	10.7 mt dw (23,582 lb dw)	-	50.0 mt dw (110,230 lb dw)	50.0 mt dw (110,230 lb dw)	
Sandbar Shark Research		116.6 mt dw (257,056 lb dw)	27.2 mt dw (59,884 lb dw)	-	116.6 mt dw (257,056 lb dw)	116.6 mt dw (257,056 lb dw)	
Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks	Gulf of Mexico	67.7 mt dw (149,161 lb dw) ²	36.8 mt dw (81,062 lb dw)	22.8 mt dw (50,159 lb dw) ³	45.5 mt dw (100,317 lb dw)	68.3 mt dw (150,476 lb dw)	
	Atlantic	261.5 mt dw (576,484 lb dw) ²	53.5 mt dw (117,985 lb dw)	88.0 mt dw (194,111 lb dw) ⁴	176.1 mt dw (388,222 lb dw)	264.1 mt dw (582,333 lb dw)	
Blacknose Sharks	Gulf of Mexico	2.0 mt dw (4,513 lb dw)	0.6 mt dw (1,411 lb dw)	-0.2 mt dw (-437 lb dw) ⁵	2.0 mt dw (4,513 lb dw)	1.8 mt dw (4,076 lb dw)	

	Atlantic	18.0 mt dw (39,749 lb dw)	10.8 mt dw (23,784 lb dw)	-0.5 mt dw (-1,111 lb dw) ⁵	18.0 mt dw (39,749 lb dw)	17.5 mt dw (38,638 lb dw)	
Blue Sharks	No regional quotas	273.0 mt dw (601,856 lb dw)	4.5 mt dw (9,885 lb dw)	-	273.0 mt dw (601,856 lb dw)	273.0 mt dw (601,856 lb dw)	
Porbeagle Sharks		0 mt dw (0 lb dw)	0 mt dw (0 lb dw)	-0.4 ⁶ (adjustments from 2012 overharvests)	1.7 mt dw (3,748 lb dw)	1.3 mt dw (2,874 lb dw)	
Pelagic Sharks Other Than Porbeagle or Blue		488 mt dw (1,075,856 lb dw)	55.5 mt dw (122,342 lb dw)	-	488.0 mt dw (1,075,856 lb dw)	488.0 mt dw (1,075,856 lb dw)	

¹ Landings are from January 1, 2013, through July 16, 2013, and are subject to change.

² As described in the final rule for Amendment 5a to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP (78 FR 40318, July 3, 2013), the non-blacknose SCS quota was under-harvested in 2012 by 107.6 mt dw and we carried that underharvest to the 2013 fishing season. Since Amendment 5a to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP established regional non-blacknose SCS quotas, we split that underharvest amount based on the regional landings (79.4 percent in the Atlantic and 20.6 percent in the Gulf of Mexico), and adjusted the 2013 Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico regional non-blacknose SCS quotas accordingly to be 45.5 mt for Atlantic non-blacknose SCS and 176.1 mt for Gulf of Mexico non-blacknose SCS.

³ This adjustment accounts for underharvest in 2013. While the total underharvest is 30.9 mt dw, we may account for underharvest only up to 50 percent of the base annual quota or 22.8 mt dw (50,159 lb dw).

⁴ This adjustment accounts for underharvest in 2013. While the total underharvest is 208 mt dw, we may account for underharvest only up to 50 percent of the base annual quota or 88.0 mt dw (194,111 lb dw).

⁵ This adjustment accounts for overharvest in 2012. After the final rule establishing the 2012 quotas published, late dealer reports indicated the blacknose shark quota was overharvested by 3.5 mt dw (7,742 lb dw). Since Amendment 5a to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP established regional quotas, we propose a 5-year adjustment of the overharvest amount by the percentage of landings in 2012. Thus, we propose to reduce the Gulf of Mexico blacknose sharks by 0.2 mt dw (437 lb dw) and the Atlantic blacknose sharks by 0.5 mt dw (1,111 lb dw) for the next 5 years.

⁶ This adjustment accounts for overharvest in 2011 and 2012. In 2013, we did not open the porbeagle shark management group due to overharvest from 2011 and 2012 (2.1 mt dw; 4,622 lb dw). This overharvest amount exceeded the 2013 base annual quota by 0.4 mt dw (874 lb dw), therefore, 0.4 mt dw (874 lb dw) is proposed to be reduced from the 2014 base annual quota.